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In the **PATENT APPLICATION** of:

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Examiner:

Pham, Hoa Q.

AMENDMENT PURSUANT TO 37 C.F.R. §1.111

Commissioner for Patents P.O. Box 1450 Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

A request for continued examination is respectfully submitted herewith. The following Amendment and Remarks are respectfully submitted in response to the Office Action, dated September 11, 2003 (Paper No. 24), in which the Examiner set a three-month shortened statutory period for reply which expired on December 11, 2003 for the above-identified application. Accordingly, a one-month petition for an extension of time up through and including January 12, 2004 (January 11th being a Sunday) is respectfully submitted herewith. Entry of the following Amendment and Remarks, without prejudice or disclaimer, is respectfully requested.

I hereby certify that this amendment is being facsimile transmitted to the United States Patent and Trademark Office on January 12, 2004.